

# The Rise and Fall of Troy

Like many other 19th century Nevada mining towns, Troy had a very short existence. Its history began in 1867, with the discovery of silver, and ended in less than ten years. Were con artists responsible for Troy's sudden demise? Or did Troy's largest mining operation fall victim to bad luck and bad management?

## English Hopes and Money

In 1869, a mining engineer from New York showed up in England carrying ore samples from Troy. He was hoping to entice English citizens into investing in a large scale mining and milling operation.

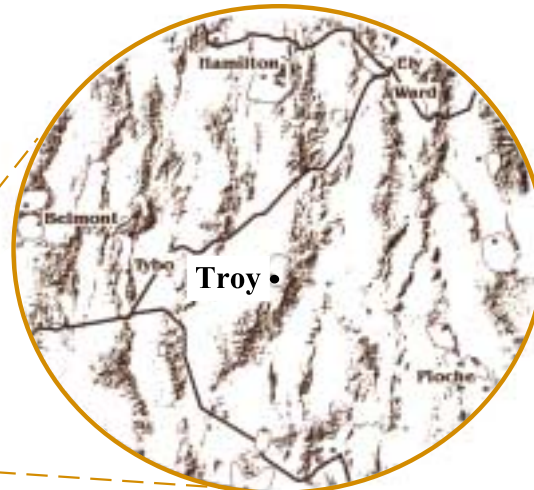


People in the towns of Bacup and Rossendale (Lancashire County), were intrigued. They sent their own representative, Captain Aitkens, to Troy. He personally collected rock samples that were assayed upon his return to England, in June 1870.

The silver ore content of Aitkens' samples was deemed high enough to pursue a large scale mining venture. The Troy Silver Mining Company was formed in October, 1870. Investors included businessmen, local factory owners and working class families. It was even reported that elderly ladies had invested their life savings.



The stamp mill ruins in Troy, Nevada - 2001



## The Land of No Returns

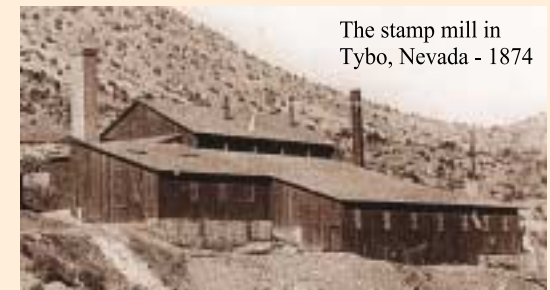
With the financial backing of these English investors, the Troy Mine was founded in 1870 and work started on the mill. Three years later, ore was finally produced - just two bars of silver.

Managers were constantly asking for more funds, citing flooding at the mines, possible strikes by miners, bank overdrafts and constant small glitches in the mill equipment.

For the thousands of British pounds invested (equal to about \$500,000), only 12 more bars of silver were ever produced. Work stopped in 1875 and equipment was sold and sent to the new mineral discoveries at Ward. Anyone who invested in Troy lost their money. Although shady deals were a problem in this period, it appears that the fall of Troy was due to a series of miscalculations and overconfidence.

## Mining in Central Nevada

The great Comstock discoveries near Virginia City, in 1859, started a wave of mineral prospecting across Nevada. By 1865, miners were reaching central Nevada and new communities like Troy, Ward and Tybo were springing up. Technologies developed on the Comstock were applied to Nevada's central mining districts, with mixed success. For every profitable mineral discovery, dozens collapsed. Even the larger mines eventually failed, sending miners and investors scurrying to the next great discovery.



The stamp mill in Tybo, Nevada - 1874

Miners came from all over the U.S. and world. Heavy British investment in places like Troy was not uncommon in the American west. The British contributed not only their financial assistance but also their knowledge of mining technologies.

British who missed out, and heard about the riches of places like Hamilton, were eager to invest in the next Nevada bonanza. British companies sent their own managers to oversee mining operations and investments. In the 1870s, Nevada received more British emigrants and started more British owned mining companies than any other western state.

